SPRING 09

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2 *President's Letter*
3 *Board Plans for FY09/10*
4 *Open to Experience*
5 *Massage on Wheels*
6 *Meet the New Board of Directors*
8 *National Office Leadership*
10 *Spa in a Strange Land*
11 *AMTA at ISPA*
11 *Massage Around the World*
12 *Members Helping Members*
13 *AMTA Supports MBLEx*
14 *Massage Therapy Foundation*
15 *COS Meets in Texas*

the newsletter of the american massage therapy association

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SPRING 09

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings to all and happy spring! It is a time of rebirth and new growth in our natural world. How does that fit in with our experience as massage therapists and AMTA members? In this issue of *Hands On* you'll see photos and biographies of the AMTA Board of Directors. This year we have a significant transformation of our board, as several members have completed their terms of office and several new board members have been elected. This new blood on the board keeps your association vital and relevant as these quality individuals offer their expertise and energy in service to us all.

You will also be introduced to some staff members at AMTA's National Office. Our association and foundation's daily operations are run by a staff of 70 people, all of whom bring their professional skills and commitment to support our efforts for the profession. They are truly the wind beneath our wings.

At the change of season, I like to do a little spring cleaning, inside and out. My home, my office, my body, my desk, my thoughts–all of the above receive an inventory. I take stock. What is useful to me? What am I grateful for? What gives me joy? What encourages my growth? Conversely, what is dragging me down? What is causing me stress? What is in my environment, internal or external, that I have become completely unconscious of, like a knickknack on the mantle that lost its meaning for me long ago? If there is something in my life that I no longer appreciate, it is time to let it go; time to give it to someone who will appreciate it.

Oftentimes, my most important cleansing process has to do with my thoughts. If I'm always looking at what already exists as the canvas on which to paint my future, then the paint is going to get very thick, and the colors muddy indeed. For example, I'm writing this at my computer on a snowy day in northern Arizona at Christmastime–a very different time than you are reading it–but for each of us, we are experiencing this in our personal "now." Now is where my point of power is; the same is true for you. I claim my present as the launching pad for creating my future. I am not chained to my past. Now, this moment, is when I allow the possibility of my future to reveal itself to me.

Perhaps when you read this, I'll be planting tomatoes in my garden. It will excite me to watch the plants grow. And I'll be very happy when I get to pick the ripe fruit and pop it into my mouth. I can almost taste that tomato, warm and juicy, just picked! This is how our lives can unfold, if we let them. Do your spring cleaning and let your best future unfold now!

Send me your visions at **amtapresident@amtamassage.org.**

Judy Stahl
AMTA President

MISSION: To serve AMTA members while advancing the art, science and practice of massage therapy.

Board Plans for New Fiscal Year

In its January 2009 conference call, the AMTA Board of Directors considered a number of issues that will guide the association in fiscal year 2009–2010 (FY09/10), which begins March 1, 2009.

CHAPTER SUPPORT

The National Office has been providing temporary assistance to chapters for their financial reporting. This has proven to be so helpful that the board approved hiring a full-time permanent employee to continue this support.

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Standing committees and workgroups conduct a variety of ongoing work for the board. Their chairs are recommended by the president-elect and approved by the president, and begin their service with the new fiscal year on March 1.

The board approved William Greenberg (CT) chair of the Finance Standing Committee and Glenath Moyle (OR) chair of the Audit Commission. All other current chairs or co-chairs have been invited by the president-elect to remain in their positions, and have agreed to do so. For a complete listing, visit **www.amtamassage.org/member/governance.html.**

POLICY CHANGES

Reserves Computation The board approved a workgroup of the Finance Committee to recommend policy that identifies appropriate financial reserve levels for both chapter and national reserves, to be completed by September 2009. The workgroup will include two Finance Committee members, two Chapter Relations Committee members and one chapter volunteer.

Volunteer Travel The board approved changes to clarify aspects of policy for travel by national volunteers.

AMTA Granting AMTA often receives requests from outside organizations for grants. The Finance Committee recommended and the board accepted new criteria for awarding grants to organizations outside of AMTA. To use funds wisely in today's economy, the committee will annually review all grant requests from outside organizations. Beginning in 2011, the committee will also review granting philosophy, policy and guidelines every odd-numbered year.

PLANS FOR FY09/10

Budget The board approved the budget for FY09/10 that will go into effect March 1, 2009. AMTA's budgeting process takes several months, involving research and analysis of both projected income and the professional environment. The recommended budget is based on board-approved strategies for the coming fiscal year and support for member benefits.

Dashboard Measures The board approved proposed FY09/10 dashboard measures to monitor the association's organizational and profession-wide success. The four main areas that will be measured are financial resources, volunteer workforce resources, serving members and advancing the profession.

Proposed Bylaw Changes

You can voice your thoughts on all proposed bylaw changes. Your AMTA Board of Directors weighs your comments before any decisions are made. At its March 2009 meeting, the board will consider several proposed bylaw changes. To read these proposed changes and offer your comments, visit **www.amtamassage.org/member/0908bylawnote.html.**

Michigan Regulates Massage

On January 9, 2009, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm signed House Bill 5651, making her state the 42nd to regulate the massage therapy profession. The new law creates an 11-member State Board of Massage Therapy that will oversee the practice of massage therapy.

The new law is the result of years of effort by the AMTA-Michigan Chapter and representatives of other massage organizations to achieve fair regulation of massage therapy in the state. AMTA advocates for fair and consistent licensing of massage therapists in all states.

The law allows only a licensed person to practice massage therapy. It establishes educational and examination standards for new practitioners and provisions for licensing existing practitioners. The law also provides a definition of massage therapy scope of practice, an avenue for consumer complaints and preemption of local ordinances currently in effect.

You can download the new law in PDF at **www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2007-2008/publicact/pdf/2008-PA-0471.pdf.** For more information on AMTA's government relations program, visit **www.amtamassage.org/government.**

MIC IS YOUR RESOURCE

If you want reliable information on the state of the profession, consumer views of massage or tips on marketing and managing your practice, look no further than AMTA's online Massage Information Center (MIC). Recently updated and enhanced with students, schools and practitioners in mind, the MIC offers extensive resources right at your fingertips. Get the answers you need at **www.amtamassage.org/infocenter/home.html.**

FINGERPRINTS

Open to Experience

By JoAnn Milivojevic

Volunteering forms the foundation of many organizations and events. It could also be the foundation of your massage therapy career, as it was for Nancy Barravecchio (NY). She credits volunteering for the U.S. Open Championship with kick-starting her sports massage practice.

"It was what led me to working for other sports associations such as the National Football League and the Association of Volleyball Professionals," says Barravecchio. "If I hadn't volunteered I wouldn't have gotten paid positions."

For several years now, Barravecchio has helped Jeff Poplarski, a chiropractor and chairman of the United States Golf Association (USGA) caddy committee, recruit and manage the 60-plus massage therapists, chiropractors and acupuncturists who volunteer for the annual golf event. What she learns through the experience is priceless.

"Anyone can say they do sports massage," explains Barravecchio, "but volunteering at events where you get the experience within the sport is a real calling card."

Barravecchio promotes her practice at the Open and keeps memorabilia from the event in her massage therapy office, which often sparks conversation with her golf enthusiast clients. They in turn mention her specialty to their golf buddies. She also applies her U.S. Open experience to the sports massage class that she teaches. She tells her students about the physical work, and equally importantly, she shares what she's learned about the mental and business realities of sports massage.

"Because of the nature of the U.S. Open event, the treatments work in waves," explains Barravecchio. "Sunday through Wednesday is practice and most people want intentional deep work. On game days they want more relaxation and comfort. They want to mentally go away and relax because they have an intense 5–6 hours of play."

The People's Open

Volunteer massage at the Open was initiated by Poplarski in 2002. "That Open was called the People's Open," explains Poplarski, "because it was the first time the Open was held on a public course."

Because of this, he wanted to expand wellness services to caddies and volunteers—some 6,000 people volunteer for the U.S. Open. He recruited 30 wellness volunteers that year. Today, nearly 100 wellness providers volunteer their services; the majority of them are massage therapists.

AMTA member Sandy Flynn (CA) volunteered for the 2008 U.S. Open held at the Torrey Pines Golf Course in San Diego, California. "It can be hard physical work on the volunteers," says Flynn. "The golf course is huge. It can take an hour to walk across it."

Among the benefits of working at the event is the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Flynn met people from as far away as Holland and reacquainted herself with a massage therapist from her own town. Volunteers also receive credentials that get them onto the course throughout the week, even when they aren't working a shift.

Of course, the business opportunities are endless. According to Poplarski, you can meet VIPs, celebrities, golfers and volunteers, many of whom have connections in the sporting world.

Massage therapists have already been selected for the 2009 Open, which is slated for June 15–21 at Bethpage State Park, Farmingdale, New York. To get involved in 2010, contact Poplarski at 631-598-7034 or by e-mail to **info@drjeffpoplarski.com**. Or, watch the AMTA website for a U.S. Open call for volunteers announcement.

For more info >> **www.usopen.com; www.amtamassage.org/member/volunteer.html**

left to right: Volunteer massage therapists Sandy Flynn (CA), Nancy Barravecchio (NY) and Tif Easterwood at the 2008 U.S. Open Championship in San Diego, California. Photograph courtesy of Sandy Flynn.

Continuous marketing and a tenacious approach have made Annalise Cooper's (CO) Therapeutic Massage To Go a success. Photograph by Annalise Cooper.

MASSAGE ON WHEELS

By JoAnn Milivojevic

"Road warrior" is one way to describe Annalise Cooper (CO). She studied massage in Washington, D.C.; then in 2003 crossed the country to relocate to San Diego. There in sunny California she began a successful mobile massage business called Therapeutic Massage To Go. In late 2008 she was on the road again to Boulder, Colorado, where she now has both an office and a road-based practice.

WHY DID YOU OPEN A MOBILE MASSAGE BUSINESS?
It started for practical reasons. A mobile massage practice has low overhead. I didn't have to rent an office space or furnish it with a lot of equipment. I could also get it going while working at other massage businesses. I started with one client, and after a couple of years I took it full time with 20–30 clients per week.

WHY DID YOUR BUSINESS SUCCEED?
It was so perfect for San Diego, because not a lot of people do in-home massage and there's a great demand for it. People appreciate having massage in their homes. It's very convenient. They don't have to worry about traffic or parking. Some of my clients are elderly and maybe can't drive, or prefer the benefit of being in their home and not having to drive afterward.

WHO ARE YOUR CLIENTS?
The majority of my clients suffer from chronic pain; for example, migraine headaches, repetitive stress disorders or conditions such as autonomic neuropathy. I started with one client who had chronic pain issues. Word got out and my referral business around this specialty built quickly. Chronic pain clients benefit from massage on a regular basis. I see some of them several times a week.

WHAT UNIQUE SKILLS DO YOU NEED FOR THESE CLIENTS?
Communication is so important with chronic pain clients. I make an effort to really get to know them and their needs. At our first meeting, I have them fill out an extensive health intake form. I ask them what their goals are with respect to the massage work. For my clients, trigger point, myofascial release and deep tissue have been very helpful. I stay on top of those modalities through continuing education.

WHAT'S CHALLENGING ABOUT MOBILE MASSAGE?
You are at the whim of the client's environment. It may not be as relaxing as I'd like, but if it works for them, that's what counts. Also, I don't always know who or what to expect when I get there for the first time. Most of my clients are referrals, and I have never had a problem. But I do carefully prescreen clients. For example, I ask about what kind of massage they've had before and why they want a massage.

HOW DO YOU MARKET YOUR BUSINESS?
I keep my brand present through what I call "soft marketing." For example, people often ask for my business card because I wear a business t-shirt with my company logo, website and phone number. When I'm at a client's home, a neighbor will see company signs on my car and call me. I also cold-call other health care practitioners such as acupuncturists, chiropractors and physical therapists. I offer them a free massage and ask them to refer me. I have a web presence and am easy to find through search engines. I registered with Google Business, which is free. I'm also a member of Spa Wish, where people can buy gift certificates online and redeem them throughout the United States.

ANY WORDS OF ADVICE?
Massage is an easy industry to stand out in as long as you specialize. Set yourself apart. I made my niche with mobile massage, but I had to be tenacious. I love being challenged by building my own business and finding what works and doesn't. I tried running ads and spent a lot of money on promotional marketing materials. In the end, I found that connecting with people by myself really works.

We want to hear from you!

What unique job experience do you have to share with your fellow members? Send us your story at **handson@amtamassage.org**. Please include "where I work" and your contact info in your e-mail.

YOUR 2009–2010 BOARD

PRESIDENT JUDY STAHL

Residence: Prescott, Arizona

I've been a professional massage therapist since 1987 and a hands-on health care provider since 1978. I own the Prescott Center for Massage Therapy in Prescott, Arizona, where I've lived for 17 years. While earning my master's degree in counseling psychology, I focused my research on the mind-body connection. I'm a mother, a breast cancer survivor, an athlete, and grateful for the opportunity to serve the AMTA membership.

PRESIDENT-ELECT KATHLEEN MILLER-READ

Residence: Shoreline, Washington

For the past 27 years, I have practiced massage in spas, ski resorts, doctors' offices and my own clinic. I'm currently employed as a health care provider in Seattle. I volunteer for AMTA because I believe in our mission to advance the art, science and practice of massage therapy and in our vision for portability of practice. I enjoy working with the diverse members that I have met over the many years serving AMTA.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT M.K. BRENNAN

Residence: Charlotte, North Carolina

I have been in private practice as a massage therapist since 1991 and have volunteered for AMTA since 1993, serving in various roles in AMTA-North Carolina Chapter and at the national level. Through volunteering, I have learned much, developed a vast network of resources, and enjoyed the camaraderie of many wonderful individuals. Together we do make a difference.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. GREENBERG

Residence: Fairfield, Connecticut

Twenty-five years ago I looked to massage therapy as a second career that would be rewarding to me and helpful to others. I became active in AMTA-Connecticut Chapter and held numerous offices there. As ethics are of primary importance to the profession, I served as chair of the national Grievance Committee for nine years. I've served on the national board as a member-at-large and a vice president and on the Finance Committee in order to give whatever I can to the continued growth of AMTA.

VICE PRESIDENT GLENATH MOYLE

Residence: Portland, Oregon

My 20-year association with the massage profession began with an invitation to an AMTA-Oregon Chapter picnic shortly after graduation. I soon found myself volunteering for AMTA at the local and national level. As the AMTA representative to the Massage Therapy Foundation for several years, I am a passionate advocate for evidence-informed research, as I believe that this is the pedestal on which the future of our profession depends.

VICE PRESIDENT CYNTHIA RIBEIRO

Residence: Laguna Hills, California

I own the Western Institute of Neuromuscular Therapy, a school specializing in neuromuscular therapy and orthopedic massage. I've taught anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, pathology of injuries, and field and clinical sports massage since 1988. In 2003, I became an honorary clinical professor at the University of California, Irvine, Medical School where I teach functional anatomy and differential diagnosis for myofascial pain and dysfunction. I have a passion for my work, both as a therapist and as an instructor.

OF DIRECTORS

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

CHRISTOPHER ALVARADO

Residence: Evanston, Illinois

I've practiced massage for more than 16 years, and have been a massage therapy teacher, school education director and continuing education provider almost as long. My recent professional focus is in teaching massage pedagogy and organizational development with ResourceETC, a partnership offering education, training and consulting to educators, schools and not-for-profits. Having been chapter president in Illinois, I am inspired and grateful for the opportunity to serve on the national board.

KATHIE LEA

Residence: Baton Rouge, Louisiana

I've practiced massage since 1986 as a contractor, sole practitioner, instructor, school owner and day spa owner. I've had the honor of volunteering with AMTA since 1988, first at the chapter level in many positions including president, then as a national Communications Committee member and chair, and now in my third term as member-at-large. I was active in the passage of the Louisiana statute, and hope that soon all states attain statutory regulation with available portability.

NANCY M. PORAMBO

Residence: Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania

I've been in private practice for 18 years, specializing in neuromuscular therapy and extensively-researched effective treatments for chronic pain. I completed graduate studies in 2002 and teach fibromyalgia, business and ethics courses in massage schools and college-level psychology courses. I've served in the AMTA-Pennsylvania Chapter since 1992 in many positions, including president. I've been an advocate for licensure, which passed in 2008. I've enjoyed a successful career and in return want to help AMTA move forward on a path marked by professionalism, advocacy and public service.

WINONA BONTRAGER

Residence: Lancaster, Pennsylvania

I have been a licensed massage therapist since1986. I had a full-time private practice until 1991, when I opened the Lancaster School of Massage. Although I'm in the classroom on a regular basis, I still have a private practice in the school clinic. I have a great passion for the student and schools. I've volunteered with the AMTA Council of Schools for eight years and am looking forward to serving on the national board.

WILLIAM RON MCKNIGHT

Resident: Bethel, Connecticut

I've served as member-at-large from 2004–06 and again since 2008, and am devoted to the concept that with a specialized protocol, massage may be utilized as a preventive modality. After developing a protocol and course material for palpation reliability, I have taken the next step for proof. I have created a computer training device and am under review for a development grant through the National Institutes for Health. I believe this device will be proven necessary as the body of knowledge develops.

JEFF SMOOT

Residence: Elk City, Oklahoma

I first joined AMTA as a student in 1991. I served as Oklahoma chapter president from 2001 to 2006 and have just completed my first year as member-at-large on the national board. My business, the Myofascial Pain Clinic, provides therapy based on the research of Janet Travell, MD, and employs six massage therapists. Volunteering for AMTA provides me the opportunity to give back to a profession that has enriched my life.

AMTA'S NATIONAL OFFICE

Elizabeth M. Lucas
Executive Director

As executive director of AMTA I lead in partnership with the association's president, efforts to serve our members while advancing the massage profession with leaders in the field. I have worked both in for-profit business and association management. In an effort to continue to lead AMTA into the future, I have returned to higher education and am working toward a master's degree in business with a focus in organizational development.

Shelly Johnson
Deputy Director

I've been with AMTA for more than six years. Before coming here, I worked for other membership organizations including the American Hospital Association, the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses and the American Society for Quality. At AMTA I oversee staff in Marketing, Member Experience, Knowledge Transfer and the web and database area. We all work hard to deliver member value, increase AMTA's benefits and services, and ensure a first-rate experience for AMTA members.

Byron Kanaley
Chief Financial Officer

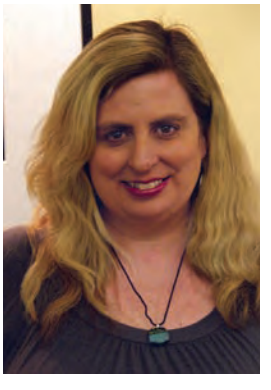
I come to AMTA with more than 30 years experience in strategic development and management of finance activity, including treasury and accounting functions, human resources, facilities, technology and insurance of both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. My primary responsibilities include determining and supplying the financial information requirements of AMTA, and providing feedback on the actual or projected financial effects of its actions.

William Brown
Director of Government and Industry Relations

With more than 15 years of leadership experience in and around the legislative process, I have a strategic approach to coalition building that is reflected in my current work with AMTA. My team and I oversee the association's government relations program, including research, legislative tracking, strategic planning, training, legislative outreach and chapter consultation. We also manage AMTA's relationships, programs and memberships with key industry stakeholders, including those related to health care, spa, and consumer quality.

Karen Kubek
Director of Member Experience

I joined the staff of AMTA in April 2008, with nearly 20 years of business management experience in both the not-for-profit and corporate worlds. At AMTA I lead a team of 20 dedicated individuals responsible for the day-to-day operations of AMTA's customer service call center, data entry activities, new member recruitment and member retention.



Gini Ohlson
Director of the Massage Therapy Foundation

The Massage Therapy Foundation annually grants funds for massage therapy research and community service projects in the United States and abroad. I've served as its director for 10 years. Prior to this I worked for the Institute of Real Estate Management Foundation and The Actuarial Foundation, and in all of these foundations I've worked in both a grant-making and grant-seeking capacity. I also serve as a board member and volunteer for several local agencies.

LEADERSHIP

Jocelyn Pysarchuk
Director of Knowledge Transfer

I joined AMTA in October 2008 and bring 10 years of experience in communications and program development for nonprofits. At AMTA, I oversee the development and delivery of all communication, education and information content. My team is responsible for promoting the professionalism of the association and its members through internal and external communications; publications, including newsletters and the award-winning **mtj**; and professional development resources, from online education to the Massage Information Center and the national convention.

Mark Tyle
Director of Governance and Chapter Relations

I've been with AMTA for more than 15 years. Prior to this I worked for two consulting companies in the training and development of both for-profit and nonprofit boards. My team and I support our chapter volunteers in expressing AMTA's mission to our members locally, as well as supporting national governance functions such as the AMTA Board of Directors elections and the AMTA House of Delegates activities. We also provide a variety of face-to-face and online training for chapter and national volunteer leaders.

Dean Vaeth
Director of Marketing

I have 28 years of marketing management experience in not-for-profit organizations. I joined AMTA in 2003 and oversee staff responsible for marketing research, product development and management, marketing communications, and advertising and sponsorship sales. The marketing team works closely with members, volunteers and other AMTA staff in order to develop and deliver products, programs and services that have high value for our members.

HOME **IMPROVEMENTS**

To help you network with your association quickly and easily, we've updated the Members Section of the AMTA website to include a new "My Profile" section. Now it's easy for you to:

- View your continuing education profile*
- Submit continuing education hours*
- Renew your membership
- Enroll in *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist®* national locator service*
- Update your locator service profile*
- Change your password
- Update your address and e-mail
- View orders

Just log in anytime to the members' home page at **www.amtamassage.org/member.**

**Professional members*

Spa in a Strange Land

By Felicia Brown (NC)

In July 2008, I had the opportunity to visit Poland as a VIP speaker at the Spa Quality & Wellness Forum, held outside of Warsaw. As a massage therapist, spa owner and consultant myself, I wanted to see what a spa in Poland would be like.

I managed to have some really interesting spa experiences, most of them during my stay at the lovely Hotel Malinowy Zdrój.

Hotel Malinowy Zdrój–whose name translates to "raspberry spring"–is out in the beautiful countryside and low-lying mountains of southern Poland. The hotel sits at the top of a hill and is surrounded by the quaint village and farmlands of Solec Zdrój, Poland.

The claim to fame for the hotel is that it has tapped the strongest sulfur spring in Poland–which does not smell like raspberries! They use the water in some of the treatments available in the rehabilitation part of the spa. You have to have a doctor's approval to take a sulfur bath, so I did not take one. However, I was not greatly disappointed. I did accidentally drink some of the water that was in a water cooler, which I would not recommend.

The services I describe were all done in the rehab center and were included in my stay. I am putting them in order from worst to best, in my opinion.

INHALATION THERAPY I thought this would be like aromatherapy. However, donning a face mask and inhaling an unknown herbal vapor for 15 minutes was not at all relaxing to me. Perhaps if I had breathing problems or the mask did not make me feel claustrophobic, I would have appreciated it more.

LIGHT THERAPY I had this done on my calf after a quick classic massage. The light is supposed to help with pain relief, but I honestly couldn't feel much.

CRYOTHERAPY This involved a localized spray of really cold air at −60°C (−75°F), which helps with pain and inflammation. It felt good for a brief moment but really didn't prepare me for the next step.

CRYOSAUNA This is truly one of the most unusual treatments I have ever experienced. Imagine wearing nothing but a bathing suit, socks, clogs and gloves, then stepping into a circular chamber about the size of your shower. In a few seconds a steady stream of frigid air, −140°C (−220°F), begins pumping in, while you march in place to keep from turning into an ice sculpture. You really can't imagine how cold this is! After two extremely long minutes, I exited the chamber and was told to do cardio in the adjoining gym to warm back up. The benefits? To improve your circulation, metabolism and fat-burning abilities. It was not something I will likely do again.

VIBRATION MASSAGE This is pretty self explanatory. A therapist uses a vibrating massage device all over your body to promote relaxation. It feels good, but I will never like it as much as the hands of a really skilled therapist.

SULFUR MASK This was a self-serve body treatment. I was given a bowl of a pleasantly aromatic sulfur body mask and told to put it all over my body before immersing myself in the adjacent warm bath for 15 minutes. The mask felt good, and the bath was the perfect temperature. Afterward I headed to the ...

SALT CAVE The room is set up with soft lighting, relaxing music, comfortable recliners–and lots of salt. Clients use the room for 45-minute sessions during which they can meditate or nap and breathe in the benefits of saline air. I really enjoyed it.

CLASSIC MASSAGE This is probably what most people in the United States think of as sports massage. It is quick and vigorous, yet specific enough to get to some trigger points and problem areas. I chose to have work on my legs and feet for the brief 15-minute session. As there is no draping in this area of the spa, I cautiously got on the table in just my underwear and shirt. I was a little uncomfortable without the U.S. standard of draping; however, my therapist did a great job. My tired legs felt better and he was completely professional.

I also had a chance to use the pool area. They had different water massage stations set up that really felt marvelous. My overall experience was quite peaceful and relaxing, just what I needed after all the travel, preparation and work related to the conference. In the end, it gave a familiar comfort in a unfamiliar land.

Felicia Brown is a member of mtj*'s Editorial Review Operational Committee, spa owner and spa consultant with Spalutions.*

Rafal, a massage therapist at Malinowy Zdrój. • The Ayurvedic Massage Room at Malinowy Zdrój. Photos by Felicia Brown.

SPA SOCIETY

November 2008 marked the fourth year that AMTA has participated in the annual International Spa Association (ISPA) Conference and Expo. More than 3,000 spa owners, directors, employees, massage school directors and massage therapists attended the four-day event in Las Vegas. The conference included professional development sessions and a trade show featuring more than 300 companies.

2008 SILVER SPONSOR

AMTA was a Silver Sponsor of the conference and had a booth to educate attendees about its members and the association. Local AMTA members also provided on-site chair massage. It was a great opportunity for AMTA staff and members to get in front of the spa community and continue to build relationships with some of the major employers of massage therapists.

AMTA also provided data for one of the education sessions, "Busting the Myths About Massage Therapists Working in a Spa." This presentation touched on the topics of massage therapy education versus spa employment needs, massage therapist demographics, generational complexities and attitudes, expectations, training and hiring. The session also covered ways to create a positive work environment and retain good massage therapists.

Many attendees and exhibitors expressed their dedication to strengthening relations with massage therapists within the spa community and their enthusiasm for learning more about AMTA. ISPA is recognized internationally as the professional organization and voice of the spa industry.

AMTA and ISPA have recognized the need for greater collaboration between the two associations, and have agreed to form a joint task force to improve working relationships by aligning employee and employer expectations. This would include educating massage therapists on the culture, expectations and responsibilities of working in a spa. It would also include educating spa directors on how to hire and retain quality massage therapists. Members from both associations will bring their experience to the task force to help create a better work environment for everyone.

MASSAGE AROUND THE WORLD

The World Massage Conference, which took place November 17–22, 2008, was a pioneering virtual massage conference that used the Internet to broadcast presentations from more than 50 massage therapy experts from across the globe. Massage therapists, bodyworkers and spa professionals were able to learn from and interact with these industry leaders, no matter where they were located, through the power of computer technology.

One of the most interesting parts of the conference was a series of reports on the practice of massage around the world. Representatives from various massage organizations described the status of massage therapy in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. On November 19, AMTA President M.K. Brennan (NC) and Executive Director Elizabeth M. Lucas, CAE, were on hand to speak about AMTA and the practice, challenges and progress of massage therapy in the U.S.

The presentations are available for replay or download until May 1, 2009. Full-access participants can also earn continuing education certificates for most presentations.

For more information, visit **www.worldmassageconference.com.**

GIVE CHAPTERS A HAND

Participate in AMTA's new Give Chapters a Hand Awards of Excellence! We're launching this program to recognize all chapters based on overall performance and their considerable effort to meet increased requirements. Chapters will be divided into categories based on their size, from small to extra large.

Tell us about all the great things your chapter is doing! **Applications are due April 15, 2009.**

For full details, go to **www.amtamassage.org/awards.**

Practicing Trademarked **Modalities?**

AMTA would like to remind you that members practicing a trademarked modality—such as Trager® Approach, Feldenkrais Method® or Rolfing®—must meet the certification requirements of the registered mark owner in order to represent themselves as practicing that modality.

Organizations that participate in the Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork and Somatic Practice Organizations will be conducting their annual reviews, and will inform you and/or AMTA to cease listing a trademarked modality if your certification is not up-to-date. If we're notified that you're not authorized to practice a modality, AMTA will modify your listing in *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist*® national locator service by deleting the modality.

Thank you for your understanding, and continuing compliance with the AMTA Code of Ethics.

ONLINE COURSES **FROM AMTA**

You're interested in keeping current with issues in the massage therapy profession, but also juggling a busy schedule. If you're looking for high-quality continuing education that's convenient for you, take a look at AMTA's Online Courses. The Online Courses are accessible 24/7, and allow you to easily expand your skills in areas of business, ethics and various modalities. The foundation for these courses is either articles by known experts in the industry, or AMTA's *The Business of Massage*—now in its second edition. Check out all the resources at **www.amtamassage.org/cont_edu.html** and gain new knowledge today!

Jeff Smoot (OK), Xerlan Deery (OK) and Christopher Deery (OK) at the 2008 annual meeting of the Oklahoma Academy of Family Physicians. Photo courtesy of Jeff Smoot.

Members Helping Members

Since 1998, Christopher and Xerlan Deery (OK) have provided complimentary chair massage at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP), a state chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). After joining AMTA in 2003, they wanted to share the marketing possibilities of this activity with other Oklahoma AMTA members.

In 2004 the AMTA-Oklahoma Chapter first set up in the OAFP exhibitors' hall. Chapter volunteers represented massage therapy and AMTA to attendees including representatives of major drug companies, hospitals and medical service organizations. They displayed a picture board describing AMTA, the Code of Ethics and the massage therapy profession, and passed out business cards promoting the Oklahoma website and *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist*® national locator service. They also informed doctors how to find an AMTA professional therapist in their area.

The AAFP is structured much the same as AMTA—membership driven, with 98,000 members, state chapters and a house of delegates. These are hometown family doctors who care for their patients throughout their lives, and refer them to specialized caregivers such as massage therapists. AAFP physicians understand the value of what massage can offer their families. They listen to the stories of how AMTA member therapists are helping people who have specific problems, with repeatable results, and are able to validate the work massage therapists do.

In June 2008 Jeff Smoot (OK) contacted OAFP Executive Vice President Sam Blackstock about the possibility of AMTA being involved in the annual meetings of all AAFP chapters. Blackstock was very receptive and provided contact information for interested executive directors in other states. By December, 12 AMTA chapters—Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and West Virginia—had made plans to participate in their state's AAFP chapter meeting, and so far four have done so with very positive results.

It could be very beneficial if, over the next few years, AMTA chapters could be present at every AAFP state chapter meeting, and over the next 5–10 years AMTA could become the sole massage therapy resource for the AAFP. By developing mutually beneficial relationships like this with allied professions and organizations, AMTA members and staff can help create opportunities for the success of the entire membership.

If you're interested in volunteering for this or similar projects in your chapter, contact your chapter's board of directors. Members helping members epitomizes what AMTA is all about, and is what separates our association from the rest.

For information on other AMTA volunteer opportunities, visit Volunteer Connections at **www.amtamassage.org/member/volunteer.html** or call Melissa Spani in the National Office toll-free at 877-905-2700, ext. 189.

AMTA Supports MBLEx

FOR MANY YEARS, AMTA HAS SUPPORTED A FUTURE VISION OF PORTABILITY OF MASSAGE PRACTICE, FAIR AND CONSISTENT LICENSING IN ALL STATES, AND UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR THE PROFESSION. The AMTA Board of Directors believes that acceptance of one exam for state regulation of massage therapy will help achieve these goals by giving a consistent message to legislators and regulators about massage licensing.

AMTA believes that, because of its development by state regulatory boards and its rapidly growing acceptance by states, the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx), developed by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB), is the best choice for a licensing exam that can lead to portability of massage practice.

"Our board of directors recognizes that the profession is changing rapidly," says AMTA President M.K. Brennan. "We hope our support for one massage licensing exam will move the entire profession forward in a unified way."

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

• Your association recognizes that tens of thousands of massage therapists have passed massage therapy exams administered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB), understanding that this would or could fulfill regulatory requirements. So, as states move to the MBLEx for licensing, AMTA will strongly advocate that massage therapists should not be required to take another licensing exam if they have already passed a NCBTMB exam or an exam their state regulatory board considers equivalent. AMTA has written to all state regulatory boards advocating this view, and is working with the FSMTB and other stakeholders to pave the way for this transition.

"We want to make sure our members and all massage therapists who have passed the National Certification Exam (NCE) will not have to take another exam if their state decides to regulate the profession or accept the MBLEx," explains Brennan.

• If you're a massage school student, you will need to know the requirements to practice in your state. During a period of transition which probably will take several years, you'll need to check with your state to find out if you need to pass the MBLEx, the NCE or some other state-required exam.

• Massage therapists in unregulated states who intend to practice at some time in a regulated state should pass the MBLEx.

HOW DOES THIS HELP YOU IN YOUR PRACTICE?

• If you're a licensed massage therapist, AMTA will continue to work to have your credentials more easily accepted if you choose to practice in another state.

• If you're practicing in an unregulated state, AMTA's advocacy for one exam and provisions for grandfathering could help protect you from taking more than one licensing exam in the future, if your state does become regulated.

WHAT'S AMTA'S VIEW OF NATIONAL CERTIFICATION?

• AMTA believes that national certification is one of the cornerstones of a profession, along with licensure, accreditation and research. (See article series "Focus on the Profession" in Hands On Jul•Aug 2007–Mar•Apr 2008, **www.amtamassage.org/member/handsonindex.html**.)

• AMTA maintains its long-held view that national certification is a valuable part of the massage therapy profession. It can provide a credential to massage therapists who choose to demonstrate that their skills and knowledge are higher than the base level needed to practice.

• Becoming nationally certified gives massage therapists in states without regulation or recognition a way to assert their professionalism and commitment to continuing professional development.

• Becoming nationally certified should also make grandfathering easier to obtain if a state approves licensure of massage therapy.

• AMTA encourages use of NCBTMB massage therapy exams in states that do not regulate the profession, to protect massage therapists from having to take another licensing exam if their state adopts regulation later.

WHY HAS AMTA MADE THIS DECISION?

For nearly three years, AMTA has encouraged the FSMTB and the NCBTMB to work toward one entry-level licensing exam for the profession. Collaboration between the two groups to achieve this goal was not successful. The organizations have told AMTA they do not accept a situation in which the two exams would co-exist for licensing purposes.

AMTA thoroughly researched all issues regarding support for the MBLEx exam and openly discussed this view with the boards of the NCBTMB and the FSMTB. We also thoroughly examined the potential impact on massage therapists and the NCBTMB.

The experiences of AMTA chapters and our national government relations staff strongly indicate that AMTA support for the MBLEx as the entry-level licensing exam for the profession will improve the regulatory environment and provide the greatest benefit to massage therapists, massage schools and massage employers.

MASSAGE THERAPY FOUNDATION

FOUNDATION NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2008 PRACTITIONER CASE REPORT WINNERS

Gold Award: Erika Larson, Lilburn, Georgia, "Massage Therapy Effects in a Long-time Prosthetic User with Fibular Hemimelia."

Silver Award: Glenda Keller, Picton, Ontario, Canada, "The Effects of Massage Therapy in Treatment of Chronic Plantar Fasciitis: A Case Study."

Honorable Mention: Robin B. Anderson, Abingdon, Maryland, "Reduction and Stabilization in Parkinson-related Peripheral Edema with Therapeutic Massage."

Honorable Mention: Sherry A. Robinson-Jackson, Shreveport, Louisiana, "The Use of Massage Therapy for Long-Term Glycemic Control in a Type 2 Diabetes Client."

The Practitioner Case Report Contest encourages skilled practitioners to share their clinical experiences. Writing case reports gives massage therapists and bodyworkers an opportunity to develop research skills and enhance their ability to provide evidence-informed massage to the public. Top submissions are awarded cash prizes and the opportunity to present the report at a research conference. The submission deadline for this year's contest is **October 8, 2009**.

For more contest information and to read abstracts of the winning 2008 case reports, visit **www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/PractitionerContest.html.**

DOLLAR-PER-MEMBER CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of December 2008, the Dollar-Per-Member campaign has raised almost $46,000, with 37 AMTA chapters participating. Special kudos to the New Mexico Chapter for donating $5 per member! Acknowledgment certificates were sent in January. If your chapter has not yet received its certificate, please contact Colleen Kruse at **ckruse@massagetherapyfoundation.org**.

Thanks again for making the Dollar-Per-Member campaign such a success!

TEACHING RESEARCH LITERACY: AN IN-SERVICE EVENT FOR TEACHERS

The foundation is pleased to announce "Teaching Research Literacy," a continuing education opportunity for massage therapy educators and schools. Through this program, the foundation will send a presenter to schools to work with faculty members and provide them with skills and ideas for incorporating the basic principles of research literacy into existing core curriculum. This exciting eight-hour in-service workshop also qualifies for NCBTMB continuing education credits.

For more information on how your school can get involved, contact Alison Pittas, foundation research and grants manager, at 847-905-1667 or **apittas@massagetherapyfoundation.org**.

IJTMB UPDATE

The second issue of the *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork: Research, Education, & Practice* (IJTMB) is now available at **www.ijtmb.org**. IJTMB is an online, peer-reviewed scientific journal for the therapeutic massage and bodywork profession, and is entirely free of charge. For details, visit **www.ijtmb.org.**

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

AMTA-Kentucky Chapter Post-Conference Massage Therapy Foundation Fundraiser:
Abdominal Massage Intensive
Monday, March 9, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,
Crowne Plaza Campbell House,
Lexington, Kentucky, $195.
8 contact hours

The Abdominal Massage Intensive course, taught by Marty Ryan, LMP, is an opportunity to explore some of the common pathologies of the digestive and reproductive systems. Conditions such as acid reflux, constipation and painful menses are commonplace in North American health care. Increase your client care skills, improve communication and learn to help manage these conditions effectively with manual therapy.

One-half of all proceeds from this program will be donated to the Massage Therapy Foundation. To register, please contact Donna Musser at 270-993-2293 or **dmusser423@yahoo.com**.

SAVE THE DATE

Highlighting Massage Therapy in CIM* Research
May 13–15, 2010, Seattle, Washington

Following the success of the 2005 Highlighting Massage Therapy in CAM Research conference, a second conference is being planned for spring 2010. More details coming soon.

*CIM = complementary and integrative medicine

GIVE BACK AND SHAPE THE FUTURE

Honorary and Memorial Gifts

A gift to the foundation is a unique way of celebrating someone special in your life, honoring or memorializing him or her while contributing to the legacy of massage therapy. When you submit a gift, the honoree or next of kin receives a personalized letter from the foundation acknowledging the donation.

The names of all people commemorated with a memorial or honorary gift will be listed on the foundation's website and in its annual report, unless the gift has been specified as anonymous. To make a donation, visit **www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/found_makedonation.html.**

COS MEETS IN TEXAS

San Antonio, Texas, was host to nearly 80 school owners, administrators and industry supporters for the AMTA Council of Schools (COS) 2009 Leadership Conference and Annual Meeting, January 22–24.

Thursday's opening session, "Lessons from the First Phase of Educational Integration," was led by Jan Schwartz (AZ). Schwartz has been at the forefront of industry leadership in massage therapy and more recently in complementary and alternative health care as well. She is a founding member of the Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care (ACCAHC), and has an active role in the areas of education and accreditation.

COS attendees were the first to receive the new AMTA Massage Industry Research Report. Now in its second year, this report was designed specifically for AMTA's School members. It includes research ranging from consumer use of massage to the training and education of massage practitioners, and is intended to help schools improve their curriculum and student services with the most up-to-date information on the industry. AMTA Executive Director Elizabeth M. Lucas, CAE, gave an overview of the report, and then AMTA President M.K. Brennan (NC) led a workshop where schools discussed the research and the ways their schools are reacting to current industry trends.

Friday began with COS's annual business meeting. Member schools voted on several items, including renaming the former Teachers Conference Committee to the Teachers Development Committee, in recognition of its current work recommending speakers for the Teachers' Track at AMTA National Convention. Members elected new officers to the COS Board of Directors, which serves as the voice of the schools to the AMTA Board of Directors. Dianne Polseno (RI) was elected 1st vice president; Kathleen Paholsky (MI), 3rd vice president; and Julie A. Gross (WA), secretary. They join President Barry Antoniow (ON) and 2nd Vice President Cherie Monterastelli (IL). School members also voted for the COS board to engage the AMTA board in conversations on the future structure of the COS and its relationship with AMTA.

The conference closed on Saturday with a panel of professional organizations, featuring leaders of the Massage Therapy Foundation, the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork, and the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards, that gave AMTA School members an exclusive update on their current programs and initiatives.

For more information on the AMTA Council of Schools and its upcoming programs, visit the AMTA website at **www.amtamassage.org** and click on "Schools."

IN MEMORIUM

MARQUETTA HUNGERFORD, 1925–2008

Marquetta "Myk" Hungerford (CA), PhD, passed away on December 16, 2008. A graduate of the Swedish Institute in New York, Hungerford had more than 45 years of experience in massage therapy. She was an AMTA member for 38 years and served as AMTA's national education director from 1981 to 1984.

Hungerford was an internationally celebrated author and instructor. Her accomplishments include providing massage to President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy, introducing sports massage into the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and founding two massage therapy institutes in California. Her knowledge and experience will be greatly missed.

CALENDAR 2009

March 7
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 157
gmitchell@amtamassage.org

June 6
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Park City, Utah
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 157
gmitchell@amtamassage.org

July 9–12
Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program
Evanston, Illinois
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 189
mspani@amtamassage.org

September 21–22
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Orlando, Florida
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 157
gmitchell@amtamassage.org

September 23–26
AMTA National Convention
Orlando, Florida
Contact: 877-905-2700
aelston@amtamassage.org

October 25–31
National Massage Therapy Awareness Week
Contact: 877-905-2700
nmtaw@amtamassage.org

UPCOMING DEADLINES
May 1, 2009—Fall 2009
August 1, 2009—Winter 2009

Hands On welcomes contributions from AMTA members. All submissions must include contact information, and may be edited for space and clarity. *Hands On* does not accept advertisements. Address all correspondence to:
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DiSCOVER

American Massage Therapy Association

2009 National Convention

Rosen Shingle Creek Resort | Orlando, Florida | September 23-26

Early registration starts soon.
For more information on the upcoming convention visit **www.amtamassage.org** or call toll-free at **877.905.2700**.

To receive future convention updates and for a chance to win a **FREE Earthlite Vortex Chair Package** go to **www.amtamassge.org/Orlando**.